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# **JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE (JAC)**

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**Minutes from public  
meeting held on 30 June  
2022**

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**JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE (JAC)  
PUBLIC MINUTES 30 June 2022**

Notes of the meeting held at 9:30am.

**Present:**

Sue Davis	:	Chair
Richard Hollands	:	Vice Chair
Dr Cath Hannon	:	Board Member
Bhupinder Gakhal	:	Board Member
Lynn Joyce	:	Head of Internal Audit - PCC
Mark Kenyon	:	Chief Finance Officer - PCC
Jonathan Jardine	:	Chief Executive - PCC
Pete Gillett	:	Director of Commercial Services - WMP
Claire Bell	:	Assistant Chief Constable - WMP
Veronica Ejizu	:	Governance, Risk and Assurance Senior Manager
Iain Murray	:	External Audit – Grant Thornton
Zoe Thomas	:	External Audit – Grant Thornton
Tony Hopkins	:	Detective Superintendent - WMP
Andy Kelly	:	Assistant Director - Corporate Asset Management – WMP
Sharon Dyer	:	Assistant Director - Shared Services - WMP
Harry Barton	:	Head of Strategy and Direction - WMP
Rachel Jones-Burns	:	Organisational Learning and Risk Manager - HMICFRS
Gemma Brookes	:	Internal Audit – PCC
Ravi Lakhani	:	Head of Financial Accounting and Tax - WMP

<b>526</b>	<b>Item 1 - Apologies</b>  The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Deputy Chief Constable Vanessa Jardine, Board Member Charmaine Burton and Head of Insurance Services Janey Barrett.
<b>527</b>	<b>Item 2 - Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no declarations of interest raised.
<b>528</b>	<b>Item 3 – Minutes of the last meeting</b>  The considerations and questions of the previous meeting held on 31 March 2022 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.  One correction was noted by Harry Barton. In relation to the record in the March 2021 minutes regarding the Risk Management Update (item 520 on page 6), there is mention of two critical risks but only one is named which was the Core Skills, resilience and Training risk. The second critical risk relates to Probation Data Sharing. <i>(The minutes have been corrected and will be republished)</i>
<b>529</b>	<b>Item 4 - Matters Arising</b>  There are no matters arising.

**Item 5 – Internal Audit Update**

*Presented by Lynn Joyce.*

Lynn Joyce highlighted the key points from this report:

- 9 audit reports have been finalised since the last meeting and 3 audits are in draft.
- The Team have followed up on recommendations from 14 audits and 71% of the recommendations made have been implemented fully. There are 24 significant recommendations that remain overdue.
- Preparations have commenced for the National Fraud Initiative aiming to identify matches in data highlighting potential fraud. A data submission will be completed in October 2022, and potential data matches will be released in January 2023.
- The report includes performance statistics for last year. All indicators were achieved. The post-audit questionnaires continue to be good and reflect positive performance.
- The audit for domestic abuse received minimal/limited assurance. The committee will be aware of similarities in this audit to RASSO in terms of gaps in training, welfare support for staff, risk assessment processes and safeguarding. A series of management actions have been agreed and will be progressed.
- Connect Benefits Realisation received a limited opinion; this system replaced a number of legacy systems. The limited opinion reflects that the governance and reporting framework for benefits was not fully established.
- At the committee's request, the management actions regarding the detained property audit reported to the March meeting have been included within the report.
  - Richard Hollands queried the implications of the accounts payable duplicate payments issue and asked for clarification of what the issue is and the implication of duplicate payments to suppliers. (Page 22 ref 18)

Lynn Joyce advised that the duplicated payment issue was reported to the committee previously and the report provides an update of the implementation of the recommendation. There was an issue within the spreadsheet used to identify duplicate payments. At the time of the audit we only identified one in 493 potential duplicate payments over £500 indicating that the risk profile is low with appropriate mitigations in place. There remains a risk where someone could bypass preventative controls.

- Richard Hollands questioned the reasoning for the categorisation of the risk profile as low and is it within a tolerance accepted.

Lynn Joyce responded that the categorisation was due to the statistics that only 1 incident out of 493 payments was identified. Duplicate payments issue was flagged as a significant recommendation in the audit to ensure the matter is resolved. Mitigations are in place to prevent the vast majority of duplicate payments.

- Cath Hannon referred to the training audit and recruitment of a Head of Commissioning, and questioned the timescales of recruitment and will the required training continue without the Head of Commissioning in place?

Lynn Joyce advised that this information can be gathered and shared outside of the meeting.

#### Discussion on Detained Property Audit Findings

- The Chair highlighted concerns of the Detained Property report previously reported to committee, including processes not being followed and concerns around victim confidence, the impact on prosecutions, the reputational impact on the Force and potential for misappropriation. The Chair asked if the Force representatives could address these concerns alongside the technicalities of the findings?

Andy Kelly responded that he has not seen the notes of the previous meeting. The centralisation of detained property was a result of the instigation of the estates strategy with the aim to maximise the use of the estate for operational policing and centralising most of the disparate stores to a central, secure location. As a consequence of centralisation, the Force are in a better place to understand what we do not have and which items of property are missing. The Force are implementing stronger management for evidential detained property, albeit legacy issues continue. Fundamentally, this audit and the estates strategy work has highlighted the issue through the Performance Panel which is chaired by Deputy Chief Constable Vanessa Jardine who has recognised the need for operational ownership and support.

Sharon Dyer added that she has inherited historical issues, including the reduction in the number of staff which has impacted the lack of audit processes regarding detained property. Auditing was disbanded in 2016 and has not continued. The current process for booking in and monitoring detained property in local stores is labour intensive and requires streamlining. It is difficult to gather efficient and clever reporting from the existing system. In 2016, there were no formal procedures in place concerning detained property going missing. The Force have potentially 10,000 items of missing property; this includes equipment that may have been bagged, tagged and placed in the incorrect location and is therefore mislaid. The Force have started a piece of work to look into outstanding missing property.

- Cath Hannon recognised the increase in oversight of detained property and asked which detained property are the Force unable to locate that may impact prosecutions and court cases? Do we know how many cases to date have been withdrawn from the Criminal Justice System due to the evidence not being there?

Sharon Dyer thanked Cath for raising these concerns, and advised that missing property is being examined at present for identification and categorisation, including those involved in prosecution cases. This is key work and has been prioritised and DCC Vanessa Jardine has implemented this discussion within Performance Panel Meetings and it is a recurring action for each monthly meeting. Sharon hopes to discuss this matter further in upcoming committee meetings.

- Cath Hannon responded that there should be a thread of information regarding evidence involved in prosecution cases.

ACC Claire Bell responded that hard data will be retrieved as the process is developed. ACC Bell advised that she has oversight of all VAWG escalation cases in terms of those that will be dropped at a court level; over the last 12 months, property has not been recognised as an issue. Within the Crime Governance Board, the Force have a monthly agenda item discussing risks. ACC Bell assured members that the issue of property has not been displayed as a risk through such checking points.

- Cath Hannon stressed the importance of ACC Bell sharing this level of confidence for members of the public to receive assurance if their case reaches court.

ACC Claire Bell added that multiple assurance is received concerning prosecutions of investigations.

- Bhupinder Gakhil emphasised that detained property is crucial and many cases could be dependent on this. Why is stronger senior management being implemented now, and why wasn't this involved at the beginning? Bhupinder raised his concerns around the volume of missing items and requested answers.

Andy Kelly recognised these concerns and agreed detained property is crucial. Through the implemented process of centralising, the Force are identifying missing items as previously there was a lack of awareness detained property was missing. Andy Kelly assured that the Force are in a

better place now than previously. Prior to the centralisation process commencing, management weren't aware of the missing items.

- Bhupinder Gakhal raised concerns for the Force's reputation and asked why this process was not overseen at the very outset?

The Chair recognised this as an important question and responded that the concerns are for senior management to reflect upon, as this issue may be occurring and unidentified throughout other areas of the Force.

- The Chair asked for clarity around the timescales for the exercise to confirm the scale and nature of missing items and to identify whether any items pose a great risk to cases.

Sharon Dyer responded that the Team are light on resources and due to cuts across the Force, certain processes have unfortunately fallen back. In two months, the Force aim to revisit reports with each Chief Superintendent and ACC's responsible for each area. Identification of what items of detained property need to be kept, and which items do not need to be kept, is ongoing. Due to the transition of officers and staff, the officer who booked an item into the system may not be within this post at present which may elongate the process.

- The Chair questioned the date of the follow up audit for detained property.

Lynn Joyce responded that follow up audits are usually provided within 6 months.

Pete Gillett commented that assurance has been provided by Sharon and Andy that this matter is being dealt with seriously. Despite the issues arising when centralising a facility, the Force aim to maintain a strong focus on this matter and support a follow up audit from Internal Audit colleagues.

#### Discussion on the response to the case management for domestic abuse

Tony Hopkins highlighted that the Team have seen a 62% increase in domestic abuse across 2019 to 2020, a 17% increase across 2021 to 2022 and a 1% increase in year to date figures. The increase in domestic abuse figures, combined with recruitment and the number of student officers entering Public Protection Unit (PPU), has created a number of issues including training and awareness, welfare and workloads.

In terms of training and awareness, there has been consideration of a skills matrix and PPU are heavily influenced by the number of students as opposed to permanent staff and officers. Since the pandemic, PPU have reintroduced in person training and awareness events. In addition, training is taking place during late shifts; PPU are using 30 minutes for snapshot training which are planned for the rest of the year. It is crucial staff feel engaged in training rather than learning virtually.

Induction packages are being reviewed, with a package available for every individual entering PPU. In particular, bespoke packages are offered for each department during a students' rotational time. The PPU are bringing in scrutiny panels considering the review and allocation department, and why cases have been categorised as No Further Action by WMP or by the CPS. The PPU have also realigned who attends various meetings to ensure the appropriate attendance.

Regarding welfare, Tony has taken over the chairing role of the Health and Wellbeing Board for PPU which is a monthly forum where messages are shared. PPU have a clearer view of the workforce and stability moving forward, including the need for bespoke training whilst understanding the needs of the victims. Induction packages include Vivup and welfare messaging. Exit meetings will be offered to each individual leaving the department to gather intelligence and understanding; the workforce lead will also be undertaking student forums to understand how the process could be improved.

The workload for officers must be overwhelming. As a result of this, PPU are working on a programme of reducing outstanding suspects. They have also reviewed their review and allocation standards and processes. PPU have also merged their domestic abuse and RASSO subgroups which focuses on contact and the Force's response to this contact. Within domestic abuse, PPU are also able to track the secondary investigation, considering what a victim has in the first instance and how workload is managed.

At present there are 3 sites for domestic abuse: Oldbury, Coventry and Perry Barr. It was agreed that a template of THRIVE+ will be implemented and dip sampling will take place to ensure this is happening. PPU have introduced improvement of tagging on crime reports to clearly see what is in workloads, alongside a supervisor checklist for supervisors who are potentially inexperienced within different departments to understand minimum expectations. Within the Performance Group, their focus remains on reducing the number of open investigations and ensuring victims are receiving an improved and more efficient service.

The Chair commented that Tony's commitment to improving the process is clear and she was pleased to see cross references to other vulnerability issues previously discussed at the committee.

- Cath Hannon questioned who is part of the scrutiny panels? How will the merger between RASSO and Domestic Abuse departments be practically managed and what happens to not joint themes, referring to work that is not connected? A number of inexperienced officers are coming into PPU, what is the number of officers?

Tony Hopkins responded that the scrutiny panels include representation from the Police, CPS and an independent domestic violence advisor.

ACC Claire Bell added that the rape scrutiny panel has been ongoing for a number of years which invites a number of sexual and domestic abuse organisations. These are vetted, and therefore we have tried to use these individuals to scrutinise cases. There is a huge crossover between domestic abuse and rape and sexual abuse offences. Op Soteria has recently taken place, highlighting areas of improvement and good practice. Good feedback has been received regarding scrutiny and victim voice.

Tony Hopkins advised that the domestic abuse and RASSO Group terms of reference was completed this morning and will be sent to the Vulnerability Improvement Board. The primary investigation for RASSO and domestic abuse offences has very similar issues between what happens in Force Contact and Force Response. Tony offered assurance of how leads work with partners. Internal issues can be worked through in order to upskill internal partners.

Regarding domestic abuse, it was agreed that 50% of its permanent headcount should be detectives which results in 82 detectives. At present, they only have 14. In terms of skills and training, there are a number of Police Staff Investigating Officers (PSIOs) who have joined the organisation to purely work in domestic abuse with a career pathway to detective training. The numbers of PSIOs are 20-30.

ACC Claire Bell added that this is a national issue. The timeline for detectives is a set process with a set number of modules. The Force's detective spread is spread across the areas of investigation in PPU and FCID. PPU have a plan to ensure the number of detectives gets to where it needs to be by June 2023, however the difficulty remains attracting people to this area of work. There is mature people strategy in place around this.

- Cath Hannon questioned the number of senior officers that have been drafted into the PPU from major crime.

ACC Claire Bell responded that as part of the Uplift Programme, the Force decided where the uplift officers would be situated. This is a 3-year programme and therefore not all officers have been



placed at present. The build of the major crime team, however, has emerged which sits between homicide and complex teams in FCID and Public Protection. These individuals will go straight into the complex RASSO team. Part of the implementation of the uplift includes postings and transferring of staff.

- Bhupinder Gakhal placed focus on the South Asian community. It is difficult for a female to build courage to contact the Force with officers visiting their homes - are the Force undertaking this correctly? In terms of the training delivered, are officers only undertaking training virtually? Are the Force working with external voluntary organisations to resolve this? In relation to the process for officers leaving the PPU, how seriously are the Force taking exit interviews?

Tony Hopkins replied that the Force are going through the toughest recruitment times with training being delivered remotely. The PPU must consider working alongside partnership agencies and charities, specifically those linked to Asian communities. The PPU have a 12-month member of staff coming into the organisation on secondment who will be the department's victim lead experience. In addition, the Force have established a support desk within Force Contact that is dealing with domestic abuse specifically. An individual will be visiting to come in and talk about lived experience; although this is not completely sufficient the process has enabled a foundation and is an improvement on previous or pre-covid methods. Training is delivered, however is completed virtually which does not have a similar impact to in person training.

ACC Claire Bell added that emerging from the pandemic, conferences are held online which can register a larger number of attendees discussing area such as survivor stories and experience of officers. It is crucial to discuss the various challenges of victims from different cultures.

- Bhupinder Gakhal responded that if processes are undertaken incorrectly, this will portray a negative message. Within the South Asian community, factors are all honour based. The reputation of WMP and trust and confidence in policing is crucial.

Cath Hannon added that the Victims Policy Team within the PCC's office has undertaken a tremendous amount partnership work in this area, and encouraged the persons recruited to collaborate with the Team.

- Richard Hollands observed that recurrent themes appear within audits, such as training and record keeping. Recurrence suggests there are underlying problems.

ACC Claire Bell advised that the landscape has altered massively resulting in changes in context. There is a huge influx of new recruits not achieving stability due to capability and capacity. The Force have worked on their crime data integrity, albeit there are now concerns of over recording.

The Chair requested a 6 month follow up on progress in implementing the audit recommendations.

#### Discussion on the Connect System

- Cath Hannon referred to re-baselining Connect benefits and the issue of the Accenture formula not able to be located. What are the issues around this?

Lynn Joyce responded that the re-baselining exercise is being undertaken due to the offer from the provider changing alongside organisational structures. Implementing a new system includes the need to develop and adapt the system to best meet the process you wish to implement which will naturally results in further change. The management actions have confirmed that the method for refining and recalculating benefits has now been agreed. Further details can be obtained and shared with members regarding what this is.

- Cath Hannon queried the reasoning for the oversight of these issues transferring from a monthly meeting to a quarterly meeting and whether more frequent meetings are required to provide much more confidence around what is happening for connect

Lynn Joyce advised that benefits are measured on a project level and a higher-level governance such as the Strategy Board. This has moved to a quarterly benefit review for the whole WMP2020 process. The governance framework was being considered whilst the audit was taking place. We can look at frequency around this.

- Cath Hannon also asked for further detail to be provided around what the structure of accountability is?

Pete Gillett advised an update will be provided to the committee outside of the meeting.

**Item 6 – Risk Management Update, including Force Risk Register and OPCC Risk Register**  
*Presented by Mark Kenyon and Veronica Ejizu*

OPCC Risk Register Update:

Mark Kenyon highlighted the key points from the OPCC Risk Register update:

- The Risk Register is based on the functions of the Commissioner and the delivery against the Police and Crime Plan.
- Mitigations are in place regarding the arrangements to secure an effective police force. Information was detailed within the Performance Report discussed within May's SPCB.
- There has been recent performance data released nationally regarding 999 calls. Information has also been published regarding scorecards in relation to CPS.
- In terms of the holding to account risk, the Commissioner is confident this is being achieved.
- A preferred candidate was decided by the Commissioner for the position of Chief Constable, and the decision will be discussed by the Police and Crime Panel.
- The report refers to the number of actions within the Police and Crime Plan. Actions are being monitored closely and progressed.
- In terms of resources and partnerships, there have been multi-year settlements for areas such as the Violence Reduction Partnership.
- At present, there is a revision of the medium-term financial plan. This will be taken to Police and Crime Panel in September.
- The Commissioner is aware of the settlement for the next two to three years and can therefore plan with more certainty around resources.
- The delivery of the Police and Crime Plan is progressing.

Jonathan Jardine commented that despite being pleased to report progress against the red risk areas, there is a potential emerging risk. One of the primary thrusts of government policy relating to funding of policing and preventative activity is in form of bespoke grants funding streams. Additional resources are welcome, although the requirement associated with bidding for such funds increases expectations for match funding and project set up costs and management. There is a need for us to reflect on the risk of a complex partnership environment alongside the implications on the OPCC regarding managing the complex funding environment.

- The Chair questioned if a great deal of movement is expected on OPCC risks. Are there elements that cannot be mitigated?
- Richard Hollands added that appetite is crucial in understanding what an organisation can tolerate.

Mark Kenyon advised that there are key features in place, particularly concerning the arrangements around police governance. There are arrangements in place for performance monitoring and one of the reasons a risk may be flagged is due to poor performance.



Jonathan Jardine commented that there are moving parts we need to be conscious of. For example, the process via which the Commissioner is seeking to recruit a new Chief Constable has included elements relating to the functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner and how they are exercised. In line with this, there is potential for organisational change following this appointment which may see movement in some of these scores.

#### Force Risk Register Update:

Veronica Ejizu highlighted the key points from the Force Risk Register update:

- Since the last committee meeting there has been a review of the Force Risk Register and monitoring of the external environment.
- The Force has seen a reduction in two risks, one of which concerns core skills training. The Force has undertaken work within the previous 6 months to ensure the risk moves from a critical to high risk. A risk deep dive was completed on this risk.
- There has been a reduction also regarding the Police Cadet Leaders safeguarding risk. There has been an increase within the consideration of safeguarding risks.
- For the critical risk on the risk register, mitigations are being put in place to ensure best practice is shared across relevant departments. There is a lower level of confidence regarding the current internal mitigations. There is an increased awareness of consequences shared.
- The Force continue to embed the process for risk management. The implementation of the internal audit recommendations has been stalled pending recruitment within the new structures for Strategy and Direction.
- The Risk Management Policy has been finalised and will be presented to Force Executive team imminently.

Jonathan Jardine recognised that there are two risks listed on the Force Risk Register concerning the asset recovery incentivisation scheme (ARIS) formula and Counter Terrorism Unit special branch funding. Both of these risks can be removed; the Commissioner has advised that there will be no change to the funding formula around ARIS at present. Secondly, there now has been approval of the option 2 approach, meaning special grant funding will be done on a one-off basis based on actual spend.

- Cath Hannon questioned what has been done to protect the information and knowledge the Force currently carries regarding organisational learning? There has been a recommendation from the Home Office to change our provider concerning website server capacity. Is there an additional cost in this?

Harry Barton responded that as DCC Vanessa Jardine mentioned within the previous committee meeting, the Force have been continuing the Corporate Organisational Learning Risk Board. This has been restructured and includes individual portfolio areas. Business Transformation and Strategy and Direction teams are collaborating. Within the portfolio areas governance meetings are held each month, there is a discussion and review of organisational learning. In terms of the Commonwealth Games and mutual aid requirements, there are structural de-briefers. A set of more qualified de-briefers are now available within the organisation will be deployed when necessary.

- Cath Hannon asked if there will be a centralised document where people could view organisational learning that officers deal with on a day to day basis.

Harry Barton responded that a learning log template is used by individuals where learning can be derived or captured. This information can be aggregated similar to corporate risks. The information is basic currently but this is a priority to address moving forward for the new department.

ACC Claire Bell added that the Force undertake statutory reviews that they are obliged to do regarding learning. The statutory reviews aim to track progress. This is circulated monthly to NPU Commanders etc.

Pete Gillett advised an update will be provided to the Committee outside of the meeting regarding website server capacity.

- Richard Hollands enquired what the handover arrangements were for Veronica Ejizu.

Harry Barton advised that a new structure will be implemented in order to replace Veronica. Structurally, there will be 3 individuals responsible for risk management. A further 4 individuals will be recruited into a more broader assurance role and 2 roles will look into organisational learning. The handover is currently based on the work programme to address internal audit recommendations. Constructing a new team will involve upskilling staff and therefore various options are being considered.

Veronica Ejizu noted that the update regarding cyber security will be within her handover. In total, there are 3 risks that could potentially close at the next Committee Meeting around CPIA, Mutual Aid and cadets

The Chair thanked Veronica Ejizu for her hard work and wished her all the best in her future role.

531

### **Item 7 – HMICFRS Update**

*Presented by Rachel Jones Burns*

Rachel Jones Burns highlighted the key points from this report:

- The Force continue to work through the PEEL inspection recommendations.
  - There has been a recent agreement that Chief Constables are to be given more authority to sign off these recommendations moving forward.
  - The Force continue to collaborate with HMIC to reach recommendation sign offs.
  - There are 68 recommendations at present, along with 5 causes of concern. These are reviewed every 3 months and HMICFRS get direct evidence and progress is discussed.
  - Child protection continues to be a key topic at present.
  - Two inspections have taken place since the previous committee meeting, including a thematic inspection on digital forensics. This revealed issues regarding meeting demand.
  - The second inspection concerned the Police Super Complaint and use of Section 60 Stop and Search powers.
- Cath Hannon advised that HMICFRS has referred to crimes, particularly against older people with two recommendations made. The response for this appears generic, is there any specific work being completed focusing on crimes against older people? Relating to stalking and harassment, how are response officers being informed and kept up to date?

ACC Claire Bell responded that the report drew into the age of the victim, as opposed to the other risk factors involved. Age is a single risk factor. As a consequence, the Force have revisited their risk assessments to ensure it didn't do anything detrimentally in respect of age, and to ensure that where age was a factor that affected vulnerability it was picked up. Recommendations were almost completed in isolation, and contradicted with some domestic abuse policies. In conjunction with the changes to the Connect system and our referral portal for vulnerable adults, this is subject to work at present.

Rachel Jones Burns added that in relation to stalking and harassment, the Force now have a dedicated training sergeant. The lead is developing software that will be downloaded onto officer's mobile phones that provides latest information.

- Bhupinder Gakhal questioned if the Force have the resources and staff to deal with this.

	<p>Rachel Jones Burns responded that the system suggests officers who feel they cannot assist with a vulnerability within a policing context, can make a referral to the appropriate agency. This is a whole Force approach to assure victims receive the best alternative to police response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Chair recognised resources and capacity as a recurring theme the committee is conscious of.</li> </ul>
<p><b>532</b></p>	<p><b>Item 8 – Insurance Update</b> <i>Presented by Mark Kenyon</i></p> <p>Mark Kenyon highlighted the key points from this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an annual piece of work which is part of the committee’s workplan to review insurance arrangements.</li> <li>• Setting out particular issues and premium levels, the report discusses different types of liability we insurance against.</li> <li>• The report also alludes to challenges within the insurance market, particularly within the public sector.</li> </ul> <p>There were no questions arising.</p>
<p><b>533</b></p>	<p><b>Item 9 – Internal Audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme</b> <i>Presented by Lynn Joyce</i></p> <p>Lynn Joyce highlighted the key points from this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of Internal Audit Professional Standards, we have a quality assurance and improvement framework.</li> <li>• This includes an assessment of how we perform against public sector internal audit standards, and also offers areas where we feel we need to improve.</li> <li>• Internal Audit believe they are 100% compliant with this programme. The self-assessment was shared with the Chair and Vice Chair and additional context added.</li> <li>• Internal Audit are currently being externally assessed with interviews taking place and surveys have been issued to key stakeholders. The results will be reported to the Committee in due course.</li> <li>• Regarding improvement activity, successful progress has been made across the year with the elapsed time of audits reducing from 77 to 57 days within a 12-month period.</li> <li>• The Internal Audit Team have set a target to streamline reports and working protocols.</li> <li>• The Institute of Internal Audit have revised their competency framework so internal audit are reviewing their framework to align to this.</li> <li>• Guidance for Police Force Audit Committees may change during the year and an assessment against the guidance will be undertaken, when issued.</li> <li>• The improvement plan may change if actions arise from the external assessment.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Richard Hollands advised that this is a benchmark. Do we measure ourselves against other internal audit teams?</li> </ul> <p>Lynn Joyce advised that response to this is varied. There is a national police audit group, with network events held annually for sharing and discussion. There is not a forum, however, for benchmarking within police forces. Any benchmarking tends to be sporadic.</p> <p>Cath Hannon thanked Lynn and the Internal Audit Team for their detailed reports and hard work.</p> <p>The Chair reminded those attending to complete the survey issued by the external assessor.</p>

534	<p><b>Item 10 – Internal Audit Annual Report (2021/22)</b>  <i>Presented by Lynn Joyce</i></p> <p>The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and Lynn Joyce highlighted the key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a requirement of the public sector internal audit standards.</li> <li>• An annual opinion is given based on governance, risk and internal control.</li> <li>• During the year 24 assurance audits were finalised, most were categorised as reasonable or substantial with only 3 rated minimal. 106 recommendations were made during the year.</li> <li>• A follow up of 44 audits, demonstrated good progress in implementing recommendations.</li> <li>• The Team achieved 94% of the plan.</li> <li>• 98% of post audit questionnaires scored as ‘good’ or ‘very good.’</li> <li>• The changes regarding risk processes have improved risk management arrangements and both organisations are in a stronger position.</li> <li>• In terms of internal control, similar themes are still present including training, guidance, management reporting and record keeping.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee noted the content of the report and raised no questions.</p>
535	<p><b>Item 11 – Annual Governance Statements</b>  <i>Presented by Mark Kenyon and Harry Barton</i></p> <p><u>OPCC Annual Governance Statement</u>  Mark Kenyon highlighted the key points from the Annual Governance Statement update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The governance statements are detailed within the statement of accounts for the Commissioner and Chief Constable.</li> <li>• We have provided an assessment against CIPFA’s seven principles of good governance. This assists in reviewing effectiveness of governance arrangements.</li> <li>• Each organisation has completed their own governance statement and met at Joint Governance Board to finalise their statements and discuss CIPFA’s principles.</li> <li>• The area categorised as amber relates to data, including the implementation of the Connect system.</li> <li>• Significant governance issues were impacted by the pandemic, particularly during the first part of the financial year.</li> <li>• The Police and Crime Commissioner election, that took place during May 2021, also caused alterations to governance.</li> </ul> <p><u>Force Annual Governance Statement</u>  Harry Barton highlighted the key points from the Annual Governance Statement update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The statement on behalf of the Chief Constable is a joint effort between the finance department and Strategy and Direction.</li> <li>• The alterations made are consistent to the principles used previously.</li> <li>• There have been adaptations around governance, relating to performance. This includes the introduction of the Performance Panel and impacts of the pandemic.</li> <li>• A new Chief Constable will be joining the organisation which will impact the Force from a governance perspective.</li> </ul> <p>Richard Hollands observed that the recommendations provided by the committee in the previous year around the narrative of the report had been addressed and the outcomes provided within this report are extremely helpful.</p>
536	<p><b>Item 12 – Statement of Accounts</b>  <i>Presented by Ravi Lakhani</i></p> <p>The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Ravi Lakhani highlighted the key points from this report:</p>

- In relation to the Revenue Outset for the Force, the actual spend was in line with the budget and managed through reserves. Notable variances mostly concern employee spend and overtime costs.
  - Capital outturn displays an overspend against the original programme concerning vehicles and IT equipment. The programme was re-profiled to match the estates strategy.
  - Police Force pensions are split into two parts, for police officers and police staff.
  - The scheme for police officers is titled as an unfunded pensions scheme, meaning there are no assets to match liability. The current liabilities for police officers are around £8.2 billion; the Force have to pay the pension the year it is due through levying, contributions and Home Office grants.
  - The police staff pension is a funded scheme and is backed up through assets, invested in various areas such as property and the stock market. The scheme is also made up through employee contributions and asset returns.
  - The Comprehensive Increment Expenditure Account is delivered on an accounting basis, considering depreciation and pension adjustments.
  - The lower area of the balance sheet displays usable and unusable reserves. Usable reserves are made up of real cash, whereas unusable reserves include pensions liability and valuations. Unusable reserves are not real cash that can be spent.
  - The employee remuneration category may be an area of public interest.
  - Property plans and equipment form a significant part of the balance sheet. As at the end of March 2021, the Force's property value was £216 million.
  - For the previous two financial years, our property valuers have issued a material uncertainty value on the Force's assets. This was a consequence of the pandemic. This year, this note has been removed increasing reliability.
  - The war in Ukraine may have impacted property prices.
- Richard Hollands questioned if the unusable reserve is a contingency or accounting provision.

Ravi Lakhani clarified that under technical terms, the unusable reserve is not an accounting provision, but rather to act as a buffer for accounting adjustments. For example, in the event of a property crash and the Force's property decreasing in value as a result, revaluation adjustments would be taken from the unusable reserves.

The Chair advised that the audit is not yet complete. The Chair thanked Ravi Lakhani for the report.

**537 Item 13 – External Audit Annual Report (2021/22)**

*Presented by Iain Murray*

The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Iain Murray highlighted the key points from this report:

- This is the first of our auditors' annual reports for the Commissioner and the Constabulary.
  - The National Audit Office issued a new code of practice concerning value for money. A value for money conclusion is no longer issued as part of the auditor's report.
  - This covers three themes, consisting of financial sustainability, governance and decision making and economy efficiency.
  - There are 3 options available including identification of significant weaknesses, improvement recommendations, or no issues reported.
- Cath Hannon asked how the Force are responding to recommendations

Iain Murray responded that Grant Thornton circle back on recommendations, and in the subsequent year update on the Force's progress against the recommendations. This is designed to be a public facing document.

	<p>Pete Gillett added that the Force are keen to implement the next steps in terms of the efficiency element, collaborating with the Home Office and HMICFRS.</p>
538	<p><b>Item 14 – External Audit Informing the Risk Register</b> <i>Presented by Iain Murray</i></p> <p>The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Iain Murray highlighted the key points from this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auditing standards require certain questions to be asked of management and those charged with governance.</li> <li>• Historically, Grant Thornton have wrote to the Commissioner and Chief Constable which are similar in terms of content within the response.</li> <li>• In order to streamline this process, Grant Thornton have introduced risk assessment documents in line with auditing standards.</li> <li>• Grant Thornton are looking for key omissions and are requesting high level consideration to ensure maximum assurance.</li> </ul> <p>- Richard Hollands questioned if a formal response is needed from the Committee.</p> <p>Iain Murray advised that Grant Thornton cannot ask this of the Committee due to their independence.</p>
539	<p><b>Item 15 – External Audit: Joint Audit Plan (2021/22)</b> <i>Presented by Iain Murray</i></p> <p>The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and therefore Iain Murray highlighted the key points from this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant risks were flagged during the last Committee meeting as anticipated at that point in time. These risks have not changed.</li> <li>• Grant Thornton’s responsibilities include opinion on the accounts and value for money.</li> <li>• The significant risks are driven by auditing standards or requirements.</li> <li>• There is a presumed risk around revenue recognition. In the public sector, there are considerations for expenditure.</li> <li>• Estimates requiring audit attention include the valuation of land and buildings and pension liability. Experts are assisting with this.</li> <li>• IFRS16 has been delayed for another year.</li> <li>• Final accounts work is due to start imminently, planning for this is underway.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked Grant Thornton for their reports.</p>
540	<p><b>Item 16 – JAC Annual Report (2021/22)</b></p> <p>The Chair introduced the report and recognised the comments made within the Annual Governance Statements regarding the role that the Joint Audit Committee plays.</p> <p>There were no questions raised by members.</p> <p>On behalf of the Chief Constable, Pete Gillett thanked the Chair and the Committee for their work during the year.</p>
541	<p><b>Item 17 – JAC Work Programme</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked the attendees and Committee for their reports and discussion.</p> <p><b>Date of the next meeting - 29 September 2022.</b></p>